

Message Text

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44

ACTION DLOS-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 ACDA-07 AGR-05 AID-05

CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FEAE-00 FMC-01 TRSE-00

H-02 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

NSF-01 OES-06 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAL-01 /133 W

----- 023975

R 020850Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3871

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONGKONG

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. I NOTED THE COMMON VIEW THAT THE GOM'S HAND HAD BEEN FORCED BY THE SINGAPORE ARRESTS AND ASKED IF THE TIMING MIGHT BE LINKED TO LEE'S DIFFICULTIES WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST MOVEMENT. PUTHUCHEARY THOUGH THIS REASON UNLIKELY, BUT ADMITTED HE COULD OFFER NOTHING BETTER. "HARRY IS NOT AN IMPULSIVE MAN; HE ARRIVES AT HIS OCCASIONAL STUPIDITIES BY CAREFUL PLANNING." JAMES SAID THAT HE HEARD A RUMOR THAT GHAZALI SHAFIE HAD ASKED LEE TO POSTPONE THE SINGAPORE ARRESTS UNTIL AFTER THE UMNO CONVENTION THIS WEEK BUT THAT THE SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER HAD REFUSED.

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7. WHILE THE GOM HAD PRODUCED NO REAL EVIDENCE AGAINST SAMAD AND SAMALI AND WOULD NOT HAVE TO DO SO UNDER THE ISA, I ASKED PUTHUCHEARY IF IT WERE NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE GOM DID HAVE HARD EVIDENCE OF THE GUILT OF THE TWO NEWS-

PAPERMAN. JAMES SAID THIS IS POSSIBLE, BUT THAT WHILE GHAZALI WOULD NOT HAVE TO MAKE THE EVIDENCE PUBLIC, HE WOULD HAVE TO PRESENT IT TO PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN. THE PRIME MINISTER, HE WENT ON, IS A STRICT AND SOMEWHAT NARROW MAN, BUT HE IS HONORABLE AND HONEST. IF THE EVIDENCE IS INSUFFICNE TO CONVINCE HIM OF GUILT, HE WILL NOT ALLOW THE TWO MEN IN REMAIN IN JAIL. "IF HUSSEIN TELLS ME THEY ARE GUILTY, I WILL BELIEVE HIM" SAID PUTHUCHEARY.

8. JAMES WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS LEE'S INTENTION, THIS INCIDENT HAS SHAKEN MALAY SOLIDARITY AND PLACED THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT IN A DIFFICULT POSITION. THE QUESTIONS WILL BE SHARP AT THE UMNO MEETING BECAUSE OF THE PERSONAL STANDING OF THE TWO ACCUSED MEN. SAMAD IS PARTICULARLY RESPECTED BY THE KAMPUNG MALAY. THE HONORS RECEIVED BY THE TWO MEN THREE WEEKS BEFORE THEIR ARREST RAISE EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CAPABILITIES AND ALERTNESS OF THE POLICE. THE CHARGES SUGGEST SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD AND FROM THIS COMES THE OBVIOUS QUESTION: HOW COULD THEY BE POISONING THE MINDS OF THE SIMPLE RURAL MALAYS IN A WAY SO SUBTLE THAT THE SOPHISTICATED MALAYS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND POLICE APPARATUS COULD BE UNAWARE OF WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE? THE GOM IN EFFECT IS IN TROUBLE WHETHER THE MEN ARE GUILTY OR INNOCENT. HE FOUND IT IRONIC THAT JAAFAR ALBAR, THE ARCHETYPE MALAY-ULTRA WHOSE HOSTILITY TO LEE HAD HELPED TO BRING ON THE SEPARATION OF THE TWO COUNTRIES IN 1965, WAS NOW LEE'S ALLY.

9. CONTINUING TO SPECULATE ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CASE, PUTHUCHEARY WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT MIGHT BRING ABOUT GHAZALI'S DOWNFALL. IF THE HARD EVIDENCE PROVES TO BE UNPERSUASIVE, IF HUSSEIN ONN DECIDES THAT THE MEN HAVE BEEN UNJUSTLY ARRESTED, GHAZALI'S MANY ENEMIES WILL LEAP AT THE CHANCE TO BRING HIM DOWN. JAMES, WHILE WELL AWARE OF GHAZALI'S WEAKNESSES, HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STRONG SUPPORTER OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THE HOME MINISTER AND WOULD SEE THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUSLY WEAKENED BY HIS DEPARTURE.

10. I ASKED IT HE FELT IN ANY DANGER OF BEING ARRESTED HIMSELF. HE SAID THAT HE WAS DEPRESSED BY THE AFFAIR AND FEARED THAT MALAYSIA MIGHT BE FACING A PERIOD OF McCARTHYISM. HE DIDN'T, HOWEVER, THINK IT LIKELY THAT HE WOULD BE DETAINED.

11. COMMENT: PUTHUCHEARY'S CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE ARRESTS ON UMNO AND THE MALAY COMMUNITY SEEMS TO US JUSTIFIED. THE ELECTION OF JAAFAR ALBAR (AT 62) AS LEADER OF UMNO YOUTH IS ONE CONSEQUENCE WHICH NOT ONLY STRENGTHENS THE POSITION OF THE OLD-LINE LEADERSHIP, BUT ALSO UNDERMINES

THE POSITION OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

UNDERHILL

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